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Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PFOR, MILI, NATO

SUBJECT: NATO STUDY ON IMPLICATIONS OF REOPENING SUEZ CANAL

REF: USNATO 1442

1. NATO/IS STUDY IS A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER PREVIOUS DRAFTS. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT US REP HAS DONE FINE JOB IN CHANNELING DISCUSSION TO INCLUDE US CONCERN WITH PREVIOUS LANGUAGE. WE HAVE SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS ONLY ON EAST AFRICAN PORTION OF STUDY.

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2. WE PREFER NOT TO GET INTO DISCUSSION OF SECDEF'S REMARKS IN NEWSWEEK MARCH 17 INTERVIEW. YOU MAY SIMPLY TELL FRENCH REP, SECDEF'S REMARKS STAND BY THEMSELVES AND THAT DEPT HAS NOTHING TO ADD TO HIS COMMENTS AT THIS TIME.

3. FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS ON ANNEX SECTION C, THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL AND NEIGHBORING ISLANDS:

A) MOZANBIQUE. DELETE FINAL SENTENCE. THESE RUMORS HAVE BEEN DISCREDITED.

B) TANANIA. WE BELIEVE PORTION OF PARAGRAPH FROM BEGINNING TO PHRASE "WAR CANCELLED" WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE IF REPLACED WITH FOLLOWING: "THE ONCE PREDOMINANT CHINESE PRESENCE AND SUPERMACY IN PROVIDING MILITARY AID IS NOW BEING TEMPERED BY SIGNIFICANT NEW TANZANIAN MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE USSR. DURING THE SECOND HALF OF 1974 TWO SOVIET MISSIONS VISITED THE COUNTRY, RESULTING IN REPORTED AGREEMENTS TO SUPPLY EXTENSIVE NEW EQUIPMENT FOR TANZANIAN ARMED FORCES. IT IS UNCERTAIN WHAT EFFECT THE SECOND CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT OF PODGORNY'S SCHEDULED VISIT WILL HAVE ON SOVIET EFFORTS TO EXPAND TIER WITH TANZANIA."

C) MADAGASCAR. FOLLOWING LANGUAGE WOULD MAKE MADAGASCAR PARAGRAPH MORE ACCURATE. REPLACE FIRST SENTENCE WITH FOLLOWING: "THE NEW REGIME APPEARS TO BE PLANNING TO CONTINUE THE 'POLITIQUE TOUR AZIMUTH' OF ITS PREDECESSOR WHICH LED TO A STRICT MONALIGNMENT IN CONTRAST TO EARLIER CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE WEST." DELETE FINAL PORTION OF PARAGRAPH BEGINNING WITH "RUMOR GOES" AND REPLACE WITH FOLLOWING: "IF THE NEW GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ITS PREDECESSOR'S POLICY, CHANCES ARE SLIGHT THAT THE USSR WILL OBTAIN FACILITIES AT DIEGO SUAREZ, WHICH IS TO BE EVACUATED BY THE FRENCH, BECAUSE THE MADAGASCAR AUTHORITIES HAVE TAKEN A RATHER NEGATIVE VIEW OF INCREASING SUPER POWER PRESENCE IN THE INDIA OCEAN."
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D) MAURITIUS. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH WOULD REPLACE PRESENT PARAGRAPH IN TOTO.

"IN MARCH, MAURITIAN PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM HINTED THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING GIVING THE SOVIETS A BASE ON MAURITIUS. THAT THREAT, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE WITH THE INTENTION OF UNDERSCORING HIS

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GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH US PLANS TO EXPAND NAVAL
FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. RAMGOOLAM HAS BECOME
INCREASINGLY CONCERNED THAT THE DIEGO GARCIA
ISSUE MIGHT SERIOUSLY WEAKEN HIS CHANCES OF WINNING
THE NEXT ELECTIONS. TO UNDERCUT CRITICISM FROM HIS
LEFTIST OPPOSITION, HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO GRANT THE
USSR SOMETHING MORE THAN THE BUNKERING PRIVILEGES IT
PRESENTLY ENJOYS. HOWEVER, THE MAURITIANS CONTINUE TO
REGARD THE SOVIETS WITH SUSPICION AND WOULD NOT READILY
ALLOW THEM TO HAVE MILITARY FACILITIES ON THE ISLAND. INGERSOLL

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